

Message Text

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14

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3957

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 2135

FOLLOWING TEL CALCUTTA 0366 OF 11 FEB 76 RCVD NEW DELHI
BEING REPEATED TO YOU. QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CALCUTTA 0366

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJ: RECOVERY OF WEAPONS IN WEST BENGAL

1. IN PAST FEW DAYS THERE HAS BEEN SERIES OF ARTICLES IN
CALCUTTA PRESS REPORTING RECOVERY OF WEAPONS BY WEST BENGAL
POLICE. AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA ON FEB 9 REPORTED "MINI ARMOURY
UNEARTHED IN BARANAGAR." TEXT IS AS FOLLOWS: BEGIN QUOTE:

THE POLICE UNEARTHED A MINI ARMOURY AT AN ABANDONED HOUSE
AT BON-HOOGHLY IN BARANAGAR AREA IN 24-PARGANAS LATE ON
SATURDAY NIGHT.

THE FIREARMS RECOVERED FROM THERE INCLUDED A US-MADE LIGHT
MACHINE GUN, USED ONLY IN THE ARMY, ONE FOREIGN STEN GUN,
THREE RIFLES, ONE UK-MADE 0.38 BORE ENFIELD REVOLVER, ONE
FOREIGN PISTOL, 142 .303 LIVE ROUNDS WITH MARKING OF PAK-
ISTAN ORDNANCE FACTORY, 22 ROUNDS OF US-MADE REVOLVER BULLETS
AND 44 ROUNDS OF STEN GUN BULLETS.

MR. AMAL DUTTA, S.P. 24-PARGANAS, SAID ON SUNDAY THAT
THE POLICE UNEARTHED THE ARMOURY ON THE BASIS OF A STATEMENT
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OF ONE AMAL MUKHERJEE, SAID TO BE A NOTORIOUS ANTI-SOCIAL

ELEMENT, WHO WAS ARRESTED BY THE POLICE ABOUT THREE WEEKS BACK FROM BARANAGAR AREA.

BEFORE THE DISCOVERY OF THIS MINI-ARMOURY ON FRIDAY NIGHT, THE POLICE, IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ARREST OF AMAL MUKHERJEE, HAD UNEARTHED ANOTHER ARSENAL IN THE SAME AREA ON THE BASIS OF HIS FIRST STATEMENT. THREE RIFLES; ONE STEN GUN, ONE PISTOL AND SEVERAL ROUNDS OF LIVE BULLETS WERE RECOVERED AT THAT TIME.

BESIDES AMAL MUKHERJEE, THREE OTHERS, ALL SAID TO BE HIS ASSOCIATES, WERE ARRESTED BY THE POLICE. END QUOTE.

2. IN APPARENT FOLLOW-UP TO THIS ACTION, POLICE HAVE SEIZED ADDITIONAL WEAPONS ACCORDING TO ARTICLES IN FEB 11 PRESS. AMRITA STORY HEADLINED, "WOMAN HELD WITH REVOLVER," CARRIES REPORT THAT, BEGIN QUOTE: MANORAMA MAITI, DESCRIBED AS AN-OTHER JNINFORMATION ASSISTANT" OF AMAL MUKHERJEE, A KNOWN ANTI-SOCIAL OF BARANAGAR AREA WAS ARRESTED ON TUESDAY AND THE POLICE RECOVERED FROM HER POSSESSION A REVOLVER AND SOME ROUND OF FIVE CARTRIDGES.

IT MAY BE SAID IN THIS CONNECTION THAT THE 24-PARGANAS DISTRICT POLICE HAD SUCCEEDED IN URZARTHING A MINI-ARMOURY FROM THE LOCALITY A FEW DAYS BACK ON THE BASIS OF STATEMENTS OF MUKHERJEE ALREADY DETAINED UNDER MISA. PURSUING FURTHER, THE POLICE HAD NOW SPREAD THE DRAGNET TO SPOT OUT HIS ACCOMPLICES AND THE NUMBER OF ARRESTS SO FAR IN THIS CONNECTION IS SIX INCLUDING TWO WOMEN. END QUOTE.

IN WHAT MAY BE ACCOUNT OF SAME INCIDENT, STATESMAN SAYS: BEGIN QUOTE: THE POLICE ARRESTED A WOMAN AND HER HUSBAND AT BARANAGAR, 24-PARGANAS, AND SEIZED A REVOLVER AND SEVERAL CARTRIDGES.

THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE, MR. AMAL DUTTA, SAID AT ALIPORE ON TUESDAY THAT, DURING THE LAST THREE WEEKS, POLICE RAIDED SEVERAL PLACES IN THE BARANAGAR THANA AREA AND RECOVERED A LIGHT MACHINE-GUN, TWO STEN-GUNS, SIX RIFLES TWO REVOLVERS, ONE PISTOL AND A LARGE QUANTITY OF AMMUNITION. END QUOTE.

3. WE ARE UNSURE OF SIGNIFICANCE, IF ANY, OF THESE REPORTS, BUT ACCORDING TO ONE INTERPRETATION, WILLINGNESS OF POLICE TO CRACK DOWN ON AMAL MUKHERJEE--A WELL-KNOWN LOCAL GANGSTER
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WITH POLITICAL TIES--SHOWS CURRENT STRENGTH OF GOVERNMENT AND ITS FREEDOM FROM POLITICAL PRESSURES. IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION ARE REMAINS FROM THOSE DISTRIBUTED BY GOI IN BORDER AREA DURING 1971 BANGLADESH TROUBLES.
LIEBOWITZ

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